

Section 14(b) 1965

[Background Voices]

Cindy. Hi, Doug. How are you? Hi, honey.

Fran Brogan

Some of my friends ask me, is it worth leaving my family behind, even for a few days to go to Washington, to take part in politics? Taking part in politics these days is taking care of your family. We Teamsters have quite a history of fighting for what we believe because we care. On this DRIVE motorcade, I got fightin' mad about one issue in particular. I told Charlie, and he got worked up about it, too.

Charlie Brogan

What have they got you girls working on now?

Fran Brogan

Section 14.B, you know, the so-called right to work law. Wait till I tell you about it.

Female Singer

An anti-union bill was passed on Capitol Hill, 14.B of Taft-Hartley divides Americans, too, right to work so called has decent folks appalled, that's a [*unintelligible*] while union men get stalled. Oh, you can't scare me, I'm sticking to the union, I'm sticking to the union, cause they are [*unintelligible*].

Charlie Brogan

Dear Congressman Jacobs. My name is Charlie Brogan. I'm a truck driver, and I've never written to my congressman before, but I'm writing now because I thought you might like to know how one citizen feels about a bill. H.R. 77 to repeal Section 14.B of Taft Hartley. This bill deserves your support. But first, let me tell you how I got interested in this bill. It all started when my wife Fran return from the Teamster DRIVE motorcade to Washington, and she told me of her visit with you. And then that night, I heard President Johnson speak on television.

President Lyndon Johnson

And as pledged in 1960 and 1964 Democratic platform, I will propose to Congress changes in the Taft-Hartley Act, including section 14.B. I will do so hoping to reduce the conflicts that for several years have divided Americans in various states of our union.

Charlie Brogan

A few days later, my wife got me to attend a local DRIVE meeting where I heard a report of the Teamsters wives on 14.B, which since I am from Missouri, I like to find out for myself. So, on my next trip I decided to check this out and it so happens the next trip out was through Missouri, a free labor state, and on into Kansas, a freeloader state. And after unloading in Joplin, I headed for Kansas on Route 96. And then I ran into an old-time business agent; Spider Webb. Boy, I figured he ought to know because he started when people still had wrinkles in their bellies. If anybody knows about right to work, Spider oughta know.

Spider Webb

I live right in the middle of right to work. Missouri is a free labor state, but all around us, we have Iowa, Arkansas and Kansas. All right to work states where their conditions cost our Teamster members dearly in jobs and wages.

Charlie Brogan

How?

Spider Webb

Let me tell you a story. We were on a road job the other day. Our man made \$3 and fringes and they worked every day till we reached the Kansas line.

Charlie Brogan

What happened?

Spider Webb

The contractor unloaded them for a bunch of freeloaders on the Kansas side of the line.

Charlie Brogan

Well, why did he do that?

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Spider Webb

Because he could get them for a dollar and a half an hour or less. I could tell you a lot more. I remember the day of the Kansas right to work law was passed and signed by the governor. A bunch of unemployed men went to the factory gate.

Male Voice 1

We're ready to go to work.

Male Voice 2

No jobs here. Fellow were laying them off.

Male Voice 1

I don't care what you're doing. The right to work law was passed yesterday. It says that I have a right to a job and I want it.

Spider Webb

You'd be surprised to know how many people actually think they have a right to a job under the right to work law. The truth is that those workers in Kansas and warehouses earn \$0.75 to a dollar an hour less, than Teamsters under contract in Missouri. The worst of it is their wages keep our employers on the run. We can't get increases for our people. Several of our employers are put out of business and our members are out of work. In Kansas, our Teamster members are plagued by the freeloaders who get all the benefits of the union contract. We have to service them. We have to fight their battles with the boss. We have no right to demand any support or even get them to contribute their fair share of running the local. The freeloader is constantly getting in a beef and creates no end to resentment among our people.

Charlie Brogan

And all this time I thought only workers in right to work states were hit. Well what Spider Webb told me could fill a lot of books. And what he knows, he got the hard way. I wonder how much there is in books? The first thing I'm going to do when I get back home is go to the library and find out what 14.B is all about. I wonder what some of the leaders of this country were thinking when this bill was passed. I wonder what Harry Truman thought when he vetoed Taft-Hartley and I wonder how much 14.B had to do with his veto.

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President Harry Truman

You will find some people saying they are for the so-called right to work law but that they also believe in labor unions. This is absurd. It's like saying you're for motherhood and they're against children.

Charlie Brogan

Well, President Truman said it all. I guess a lot of people were taken in because Congress passed it anyway.

Female Voice

I say this proposal is a backward step that should be rejected. We should continue giving labor and management freedom to meet together in collective bargaining with equal rights to solve their common problem.

Charlie Brogan

I guess I'm in pretty good company with all these great Americans against it, too. How did they get away with it out? How did they put this hoax over on the American people? I guess they hired the best hoaxers that money could buy. I wonder if these hoaxers promoting right to work laws all over the United States are, are the same ones pushing the John Birch Society and other extremist hate groups? Well, these guys are professionals at dividing people. If you tell a big lie often enough, people will believe it. Here's the DRIVE reporter. Uh-huh, Freddy the freeloader. A 14.B fink. Where to find him in 19 states with union busting 14.B laws. In these states the union shop is banned so Freddy gets a free ride. What Freddy gets for free? Pay scale and pay raises won by the union. Pension, health benefits, sick pay, and vacations won by the union. Union investigates and follows through on any grievances Freddy may have. Who pays for all this freeloading? The other workers who have joined the union, organize the plant, and obtain the contract. How long can Freddy freeload? Until we repeal section 14.B of the Taft-Hartley law. It's up to you and me. Get rid of 14.B. President Kennedy, when he was senator for Massachusetts, spoke of the ghost towns the right to work states left in the wake of runaway mill owners. In the *Atlantic Monthly* magazine in January 1954, he wrote in Massachusetts alone, over 30,000 jobs had been lost in the textile business since 1946. When the Kilburn Cotton Mill in New Bedford, Mass. was partially liquidated and moved to North Carolina, 1000 workers lost their jobs. The same companies opened new plants in the south where there were right to work laws. I could hardly wait to get out on my next trip, because it took me right straight through New Bedford, Mass, in the closed mill town that Senator Kennedy had talked about. Hey Mac, what happened here when the mill closed down?

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Mac

Kilburn was the most important industry here. Losing a mill just about wrecked the whole community. Thousands of our people lost their jobs and couldn't find new ones.

Charlie Brogan

And what this guy didn't know was that the workers in the states where the runaway textile mills had scattered weren't doing so good either. Now, this I found out traveling through some of the southern states. The next week, I was in Tennessee to pick up some lumber and while a truck was being loaded, I had time to talk to the mill owner.

Mill Owner

I moved down here from Oregon because I couldn't make it there. I had to pay an average of \$2.72 an hour in wages, but I didn't get any more for my lumber that I'm getting down here in Tennessee. And here I only pay \$1.40 an hour in wages. That's \$1.32 an hour difference. I took me that difference and I bought me a plantation, that old Southern mansion you passed on the hill. You know it still has the old slave quarters, just as it was.

Charlie Brogan

I guess Senator Morse of Oregon must have been thinking of this runaway Oregon mill owner when I heard him say on television:

Senator Wayne Morse

Let's take Tennessee. In 1952, the weekly average earnings in Tennessee, \$54.07 against the national level of \$58.56. You see in round numbers some \$4 difference. But in 1963, Tennessee having become a so-called right to work state, the average weekly earnings in Tennessee was \$78.58, but the national average was \$98.08, or a difference you see of \$20. Now that's what happens when you turn the rights of workers over to a state jurisdiction with low labor standards. And of course that's what anti-union forces want to do and one of the sad things about it...

Charlie Brogan

And I remember another time when a detour introduced me into something I had never thought of.

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Male Voice 3

I tell you, you got to go around that ridge that's out down there because we don't have very good roads this way.

Male Voice 4

How come?

Male Voice 3

They tell us they don't have the tax money to do it, to fix the roads with and things. We can't get, you can't get blood from a turnip because people here don't make the money, the wages that they make in the other states. Not only that, with the roads, we have a mess with the schools and things. We don't have enough teachers to go around. Classrooms are crowded. We don't have enough classrooms.

Charlie Brogan

I didn't have to go back to the classroom to know if people don't make money, they don't have anything to pay taxes on. When I got back home, there was one person I wanted to talk to.

Male Voice 5

Charlie, it is our moral duty to proclaim the evil of 14.B. Where union shops are banned, the wages of all workers are depressed below the American level. Where union shops flourish, great social progress has been made by all, at the cost, however, of great suffering by the loyal members. Some of whom have even sacrificed their lives for the cause. It is a model for the freeloaders to accept the benefits of such costly loyalty without shedding union responsibility.

Charlie Brogan

A time has come to do something. As luck would have it, that weekend Fran had scheduled a drive cookout and everyone was geared for action. It was a follow up to their drive motorcade trip to Washington. Teamsters were there, but also some of our neighbors who were not Teamsters.

Fran Brogan

When we visited Congressman Jacobs in Washington, we opened his mind to the repeal of 14.B, but the job isn't finished. Now we have to follow up our visit with letters.

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Female Voice 2

How about writing to our senators too?

Female Voice 3

Yes, of course. When we were in Washington, we also saw Senator Hartke who was very receptive and pledged himself to repeal 14.B, as did Senator Bayh.

Male Voice 6

Then why do we have to write to them if they agree with us?

Female Voice 3

It's not enough to open the door. We have to keep it open. Remember the right to work people are flooding our congressmen and senators with letters and pressuring them.

Male Voice 7

That's right, and we've got to get with it now even more than they have. Get letters from all kinds of people to give our congressmen the ammo they need to put the arm on their leadership and get them to take action now, at this session of Congress.

Male Voice 8

Each of us call a meeting like this and get a letter writing campaign started.

Fran Brogan

And remember, the letters have to be written in your own handwriting and in your own words. A form letter is worse than nothing at all.

Male Voice 9

You see what one trip to Washington will do for...

[Multiple voices talking over each other]

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Female Voice 4

I accept the nomination.

Charlie Brogan

We citizen politicians have now launched a campaign in a smoke filled cockpit. And so Mr. Congressman, I hope you agree with us that this hoax has been allowed to exist too long. I also want you to know that the wives of Teamsters all over America are going to Washington to talk with you and with other members of Congress about this problem. In closing, I hope you will give your vote for and your wholehearted support to H.R. 77 when it comes before the Congress. Now we'll do our share. We will write letters to our congressmen and let them know how we feel. And with your help, we shall reunite a divided America. Vote yes, H.R. 77. Very truly yours, Charlie Brogan.

[Music]

Male Voice 10

The film you have just seen places a problem squarely in your lap. As long as 14.B is on the books, freeloaders will continue to divide your union, weaken your bargaining power, and ride on your backs. Getting free all the benefits of the union contract but paying none of the freight. Unload the freeloader. Repeal 14.B. The choice is yours. Show this film to your friends and neighbors. Explain what 14.B repeal means to them. Failure to repeal 14.B in this session of Congress means being saddled with this union busting law for years to come. Write your congressmen and senators today. Tomorrow will be too late.